

HEAVEN'S

ALL THE TIME

SYNNOVE



Aug/Sep 2008 Issue #76 \$2.95

JACOB'S DREAM
ALETHEIAN
EXTREME LIVE REVIEW
WHAT ZERO HOUR SAYS
+ TONS OF ALBUM REVIEWS

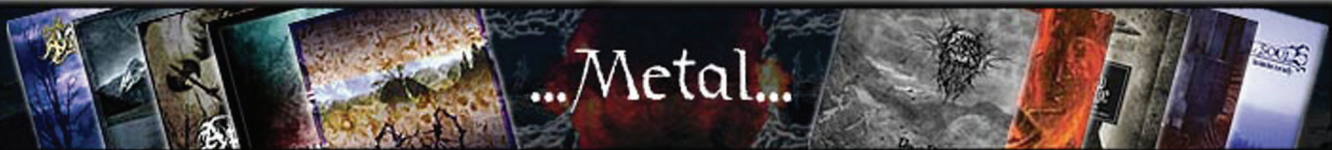


Nokternal Hemizphear

Webstore, Distro, Label



...Apparel...



...Metal...



Novels...DVDs



Artistic
Services



Fire Throne

"Day of Darkness ...and Blackness"

Limited Edition
Digipak Re-release



2P3

"Alchemists Earth of Aeon A.C."

Borgazur



www.nhmetal.com

HEAVEN'S METAL

Issue #76
August/September 2008

CANYOU FEEL IT?

I have to be honest, I'm bummed out about this issue. We had a long-time advertiser bow out, it was late in production, and various other factors made it feel like work. It's got some meat to it, though. What do you think? Are you digging this issue? What are you getting out of Heaven's Metal Fanzine? Are you enjoying it? What does it lack? What is it doing good? Your input might mean more than you ever know at this point. Why don't you tell us? Email or snail-mail us with your feedback. You might end up single-handedly steering us in a new direction. I'm not kidding. I hope you appreciate my honesty here. It's what you get in our album reviews, interviews, etc. There's no reason to polish our words here.


Doug Van Pelt



ELEMENTS

- 04 METALTRACKS** Driver, Kreyson, Mortification, X-Sinner, ReinXeed, Theocracy, Norma Jean, Scott Stapp, and more.
- 08 JACOBS DREAM** "Doc" Jonathan Swank gets all metal with these power riff masters.
- 12 WHAT ZERO HOUR SAYS** Jonathan Swank does a "Says" style article with Zero Hour.
- 14 SYNNOVE** Chris Beck gets up-close and personal with this issue's cover band, discussing music, God, and paths.
- 16 ALBUM REVIEWS** 16 of 'em.
- 22 COLUMNS** Steve Rowe and Pastor Bob.

Heaven's Metal Editorial Team:

Chris Beck, Bob Beeman, Jeff Collins, Mark Blair Glunt, Chris Gatto, Genifer Groff, Loyd Harp, Ed Hellig, Daniel Jesse, Johannes Jonsson, Mike Larson, Jeff McCormack, Trevor Ray, Steve Rowe, Jonathan Swank, Doug Van Pelt, Todd Walker

HmMagazine.com/heavensmetal/

1-year subscriptions (6 issues): \$9.99 (USA) | \$21.77 (Foreign)

Advertising/Editorial Info: dvanpelt@hmmag.com
512.989.7309 | 1660 CR 424, Taylor TX 76574

Copyright © 2008 Heaven's Metal (TM). All rights reserved.

STRICKEN



NOW AVAILABLE THE SELF-TITLED DEBUT FROM

STRICKEN!



"THE WAIT IS OVER!!!"

The wait is over... Roxx Records has secured the rights to release the long out of print **Eternal RYTE** release **World Requiem**. The band's debut CD has been a much sought after collectible with collectors paying top dollar for the original release on sites like eBay. Now available for a limited time and in a limited quantity this 2 disc set will feature everything you could imagine from this 80's glam band's history.

The 2 disc set will include the entire **World Requiem** release as well as 2 earlier recorded demo tapes. The 6 track **Anthem** demo was sold by the band and at shows prior to the release of **World Requiem**. Also the never before released **Untitled** demo, which includes 7 additional never before released songs. If that's not enough you will also get some exclusive LIVE performances captured in the band's heyday.

This deluxe package will be completely re-mastered, repackaged and re-released in a limited edition quantity of only 1000. The set is now available direct from Roxx Productions at www.roxxproductions.com and also at these fine retail outlets...

CD Baby (www.cdbaby.com) You can hear many samples here as well!,
The Crossing Music in the US (www.crossingmusic.com)
Disk Heaven in Japan (www.diskheaven.com)
Rock Stakk Records in Japan (www.rockstakk.com)
Nordic Mission in Norway (www.nordicmission.net)
Metal Community in Sweden (www.metalcommunity.se)

This release is destined to become a collectors item so get your copy now while they are still available!

For Full details visit www.roxxproductions.com

**ROXX
RECORDS**

METAL TRACKS

Hard-news-for-metal-heads



ALETHEIAN RISING

By CHRIS GATTO

As this highly technical progressive death metal band from Pennsylvania and Maryland tore up the Sanctuary stage at Cornerstone this year, many of their devoted following must have wondered why all has been quiet in Aletheian's camp for so long. Recently we spoke to lead singer, graphic designer, and stained glass artisan Joel Thorpe to find out why. In ten years time this band has grown mostly by word of mouth – grafting beauty with brutality with a surgical skill. Each of Aletheian's 3 albums, self-released or released independently, has been snapped up by rabid fans, but somehow commercial success – or even a record deal – always eluded the band. That is, until now.

Aletheian's 3rd album *Dying Vine* was self-released under Hope Prevails Productions in 2005. The following year guitar wizard and band founder Alex Kenis took the lead guitar slot in one of metal's fastest rising bands Becoming the Archetype, touring extensively with them for the next 2 years, as well as recording the critically acclaimed *Physics of Fire* album with BTA. While great news for BTA, the situation made for a long waiting game for Joel and Aletheian, who had to share their star player with the band from Georgia.

Meanwhile news came out that Aletheian had signed a contract with Iron Clad Recordings, a division of Metal

Blade, and that their previous outing *Dying Vine* would be reissued under the new flag. The reissue ended up taking a year, but the original songs have been remastered – ending up tighter, crisper, and cleaner, as well as more modern sounding than the 2005 edition. For the first time, the album is readily available at most major music outlets, and the bonus cover of Cynic's "How Could I?" has many new metal fans discovering Aletheian for the first time. However, in that year between Cornerstone 2007 and 2008 appearances, the band did not play together at all.

The band's absence from the scene ended with the announcement that Alex Kenis is leaving BTA after 2 years, to be replaced by their original guitarist, and returning to the band he founded. There's no doubt that Alex's involvement with the popular BTA and the new major label push will bring Aletheian to a whole new level. For too long this death metal gem has gone unappreciated except in the local metal arena. The band is currently working on original material for a new album and working out touring plans. Hit the guys up at aletheian.com and pick up the reissue or merch on their website or at your favorite metal retailer.

[Ed—see review this issue]

News bullets

Kreyson performed as a main support of Judas Priest in Slovakia this Summer. "It was great," reports **Josef Korenek**, who added that the drummer and bassist for Judas Priest were in the hall during Kreyson's set. Kreyson has enlisted Heaven's Metal's Doug Van Pelt for help in organizing a metal festival in the Czech Republic next spring. We'll keep you informed if/and things progress.

The new Brainstorm Festival will take place from 21-23 November 2008 in The Netherlands. Besides concerts, the festival will have seminars, exposition and DVD recordings. Some of the bands appearing will include a reunion of **Seventh Angel**, **Mehida** and many more. All information can be found at brainstormfestival.com.

The new **Kekal** album *Audible Minority* is coming soon. Visit their myspace to hear tracks, get free tracks and for more information: myspace.com/kekal

Metal fans rejoice! Melodic metal masters **Driver** have reformed and will have a new CD out September 26th. Rob Rock and Roy Z are back in the fold to continue what was started with one of the best demos back in 1990. The new album will be entitled *Sons of Thunder* and features twelve tracks. (Ed—Trust me, that demo ruled the day)

Mortification is back with what they claim is their biggest and best visual package ever. *Live Humanitarian* will be released as a double DVD by Nuclear Blast on September 26th. Disc one will contain the concert – filmed with seven cameras and a massive light show – and disc 2 will have extensive reflections from **Steve Rowe** about many aspects of Christian music, as well as highlights from last year's European Tour, the entire nineteen minute *EnVision* *Evangelene* film clip and footage of Steve competing at The Australian Track and Field Championship in 2005.

Classic heavy metal band **Stairway** is currently writing new material for an album with front cover artwork by renowned artist Rodney Matthews. For up to date news visit their websites: stairwayonline.co.uk and myspace.com/stairway.

Faith Factor has signed with Retroactive Records and their full length CD, *Against a Darkened Sky*, is set to be released November 1st.

In more cool reissue news, **Legacy** – who were originally signed with Star Song in the 80s – will have a CD of their material released in November on Eonian Records. Watch for more information at www.eonianrecords.com.

X-Sinner lead vocalist/guitarist **Rex Scott** has been asked to be the host of the motorcycle enthusiast driven radio show "Chrome" on the Full Armor Of God radio network. Rex will host the weekly broadcast interviewing a new special guest each week while spinning some of his favorite bands' music like Whitecross, Bloodgood, F.O.G and Deliverance among many others.

One Bad Pig's **Carey Womack** and **Paul Q-Pek** are both regularly writing for *HM* these days, as is **Stavesacre's** **Mark Salomon** and **Project 86's** **Andrew Schwab**.



Extreme returns



Forget what you know about old bands getting back together, because Extreme just re-wrote the book on reunion tours.

Following a one-hour set by King's X (in that trio's hometown of Houston, TX, no less), Extreme came out to the romping sounds of "Comfortably Dumb," with its equal parts blues & funk riffs that borrows quite liberally from Led Zeppelin's "Moby Dick" and "Black Dog." It was apparent from the first notes and the way both vocalist Gary Cherone (sporting goggles with a taped "X" over his left eye) and guitarist Nuno Bettencourt bounced around the stage that this band wasn't going to rely on older fan appreciation to make it through the night. Nope, they came out of the gates fighting like they had something to prove. They followed up their brand new one with the energetic "Decadence Dance" from their second (*Pornograffiti*) album.

It seemed that not a single note or even a breath between songs was wasted during their nearly two-hour set. Cherone certainly proved himself the consummate frontman, making funny comments between songs and moving like he'd get penalized by the ounce if he had any energy left at show's end. The guy was fluid in his motions, too, looking like a professional dancer that would easily take out Jerry Rice, Emmitt Smith, Clyde Drexler or any athlete dancer-wannabe on *So You Think You Can Dance*. While so many metal frontmen came off as pretentious and silly with their "expressive" hand motions and body movements during their story-telling tunes, Cherone snapped between each movement with such precision and snappy speed that you were simply impressed. His partner in showmanship, Bettencourt, looked about as cool as a skinny yet ripped long-haired guitarist could; but he



carried the same sense of urgency with him, as if years of accolades and respect didn't mean a thing. If you didn't know his age or pedigree, you'd think he was some 18-year-old kid trying to conquer the world with his instrument. He was equally adept at bending his strings, like the "Voodoo Child" riffs in "Rest In Peace," or shredding notes and blazing through quick scales as if it were effortless. I felt like I was witnessing what it would have been like to see Randy Rhoads play back in Ozzy's early days. And while we're dropping names, seeing Extreme on this night felt like I was seeing Aerosmith, Queen, Ozzy Osborne and Led Zeppelin all wrapped up into one energetic show.

The highlights of the show kept on coming, and it's hard to stop and reflect upon them all; but hearing the spot-on harmonies of their latest single, "Stars," was one impressive moment. If the confidence in their faces and the swagger in their steps didn't adequately convey that this band was both hungry and confident, pulling off the hoe-down that was "Take Us Alive" would have erased all doubts that the band had earned and won over the crowd, which gladly clapped along in rhythm to the country-fied ditty.

This reviewer never had the chance to see this band on their infamous *III Sides To Every Story* tour, so it was thrilling to hear tunes like "Warhead" and "Cupid's Dead," which both sounded passionate and crisp. Cherone's gestures of pulling back a bow for the death shot was, again, well-timed and delivered with a flair that probably no one else could get away with. "Get The Funk Out" punched with more of the aggression that this night was full of. A band this old and this out of circulation is just not supposed to turn in a performance that might rank as one of the best ever witnessed.

[Go to hmmag.com for more of this review by DVP]

Christian Liljegren has officially left Narnia, with his last gig being on August 2nd. Christian was a founding member and with the band for twelve years. The band will go on and are currently searching for a new vocalist.

Ultrium Records are very proud to announce the signing of the Swedish melodic metal band **Harmony** to the label. Their sophomore album *Chapter II: Aftermath* will be released September 26th in Europe, and will be preceded by the EP *End of My Road*. The EP includes three songs off the upcoming album plus two exclusive tracks for this release, and will be released on August 11th. Visit ultrium-records.com/harmony.

Laudamus, the melodic metallers from Norrland, the North part of Sweden now has a new drummer. His name is **Anders Wigenstam**. Their first show with the new line up will be in August 2nd at "Lulekalaset" in Luleå, Sweden. The band is also writing new songs and are really excited about the future. [laudamus.se]

The brutal metallers **Shadows of Paragon** has added a new visual studio report from the recording of their new album. Check it out at [shadowsofparagon.com]

Divinefire has now released their fourth and final album *Farewell*. As their previous albums this is top quality all the way and shouldn't be missed if you liked their other albums [myspace.com/divinefireofficial]

ReinXeed has now released their debut album, *The Light*, on CMS Sweden/Rivel Records. The band is fronted by talented **Tommy Johansson**, that both has a brilliant voice and also is a real shredder on the guitar. Musically it's really melodic and has plenty of tasty guitar solos. I would describe it stylewise as Melodic Power Metal with some symphonic influences. Definately one of the best new metal bands the latest years. Not to be missed! [myspace.com/reinxeednorth]

The Metal Bible continues to be distributed to the masses. Johannes Jonsson took three hundred copies to a recent Iron Maiden concert and was able to distribute every one of them to willing recipients. May we all agree in prayer for those who took one that the Spirit might move on them to read and understand what they have in their hands. Visit metalbibel.nu/enginfo.htm for more details on the *Metal Bible*.



METAL TRACKS

Page six



THY WILL BE DONE

Have you heard of / featured / interviewed / reviewed the album *Was And Is To Come*, by Thy Will Be Done? I've downloaded their debut album from iTunes, based on "listeners also bought" section and WOW. Please check them out. There is not much online about these guys yet and I'm curious about their name and album concept. Also, any news on new music from xDeathstarx? Thx for all you do to bring us news and info on great music and artists.

–Phil, Raleigh NC

Ed – I had not...until now. I hear it's great stuff in the vein of Demon Hunter. Thanks for the tip.

LIGHTENING "STRICKEN" TWICE

Hey Doug, I've heard through the grapevine about a new metal band called Stricken. I hear these guys are really good and that they have a pretty positive and evangelical lyrical approach. Do you know anything about 'em? I hear they have a new album out soon.

–Gene, Austin, TX

Doug – Funny you should ask, Gene. Below is a reprise of an album review I did last fall when we thought this was going to be released. Also, look for a feature on them in the next issue.

These guys tear it up, big time! What's this sound like? Krush met Oil while Rob Zombie was listening to Pearl Jam play Jesus Rock.

Seriously, these guys lay down a groove-rich riff that will have your head bobbin' and foot tappin' like a "right-smart" seizure. Dave Meriwether's (ex-Krush) voice is primo—tough, yet very clear. The guitars, bass and drums mesh perfectly—just super tight—like a well-oiled machine and the mixing quality is so clean it makes ya wanna spit. Credible, Christ-centric hard rock/heavy metal doesn't get much better folks, and the message is loud and clear: believe and repent or be "stricken." [Roxx Productions] Jonathan Swank

FANZINE SUITS MY FANCY

Good to be back. I must admit my interest weaned when the magazine (*HM*) started including more punk, emo, etc. Seasons change whether we want them to or not. I knew of the fanzine and figured now was the time to actually give it a whirl.

–George Forleo Hary, via internet

Ed – Thanks. .

SCOTT STAPP IS IN FLORIDA

Do you know where Scott Stapp is these days? I would love to keep up with him. Or where I can find out? Thank You for your time.

–Tina Nash, Hillsboro OR

Ed – There's a fan website with a list-serv thing called passionbreedsfollowers.com.

[nothin' but] News bullets

In case you have not heard, **Theocracy** has been signed to Ulterior Records and their new CD *Mirror of Souls* is set to be released in early fall of this year. The material expands on the epic, melodic metal style introduced on the self-titled debut album, and the addition of drummer **Shawn Benson** and guitarist **Jon Hinds** has added a new dimension and energy to the sound.

On his birthday, August 8, **Scott Stapp** released a lovely new acoustic arrangement of "Broken" on his MySpace. You can download the mp3, or watch a video of Scott recording it in the studio! Scott was also recently interviewed for a new VH1 special, and shares some tales from the road – be sure to check out the video! In other news, Scott's management reports that his album is now due the second quarter of 2009

David Benson of Dbeality fame has posted a live video recorded from the recent Elements of Rock Festival 2008 on MySpaceTV. Be sure to search it out.

Soundmass is pleased to announce the signing of Western Australia band **Scourged Flesh**. Currently writing material for their 3rd CD, tentatively titled *Chains of Slavery*, the band is planning to enter the studio at the end of 2008. Scourged Flesh was formed by brothers **Todd** (vocals/guitar) and **David Kilgallon** (drums), who is now sharing drumming duties with the legendary Mortification. The band has recently been joined by guitarist **Daniel Holmes**, known for this outstanding work in **Templar**. Expect the new album from Scourged Flesh to be brutal death metal with a focus on groove.

Hard rockers **Decemberadio** is going to be touring as part of the multi-band *ShoutFest* this Fall.

Norma Jean, who deliver the most furious, and yet melodic, music of their career with their new album *The Anti Mother*, will headline the appropriately-titled *The Anti Mother Tour* presented by Solid State Records. The six-week nationwide U.S. tour – with additional sponsorship from Hot Topic and Monster Energy Drink – kicks off Friday, October 3 in Knoxville, TN and wraps Saturday, November 15 in the post-hardcore group's hometown of Atlanta, GA. Norma Jean will be joined by fellow labelmates **Haste The Day**, **The Showdown**, **MyBride**, **Children 18-3** (October 3–October 26) and **Oh Sleeper** (October 28–November 15). *Alternative Press* magazine hailed NJ's new album as "...the best record of their career." In the current *Hails & Horns* August cover story, writer Reyan Ali explains: "Whether you want to classify them as metalcore, hardcore, screamo or simply 'heavy,' Norma Jean will always remain a band more interested in chasing their own instincts and ideals than genre limitations, meshing a vicious crush of guitars with purposefully non-expository lyrics that rake deep into questions about personal and social insecurity." *Revolver* writer Tim Grierson claims that standout tracks "'Death of the Anti Mother,' 'Self-Employed Chemist,' and 'Vipers Snakes and Actors' have a swinging, furious urgency..." The band also just shot a video for their debut single, "Robots 3, Humans 0," now buzzing at commercial radio.



Subscribe to HM

IT'S ANOTHER PRO-METAL MAGAZINE, TRUST US!
Please support the mags that support the heavy stuff!




One year – \$15

go to hmmag.com

Satisfy your soul...



FEAR THIS!

GRAVE ROBBER – BE AFRAID +1

If you like your gothic/horror hard rock spiked with a little arsenic and a healthy dose of dark humor, check out Be Afraid! Band members Dr. Cadaver, Nameless, and Maggot offer you chainsaw guitars, super-tight arrangements, and blatant morbidity wrapped around insanely catchy choruses. Wretched provides elite vocal skills in a mesmerizing Danzig/Rob Halford sort of way! For fans of Alice Cooper, Type-O-Negative, The Misfits and Danzig! See them in concert at Cornerstone 2008! Includes industrial remix by Angel mainstream metal band DOPE!

[myspace.com/graverobberpunk]



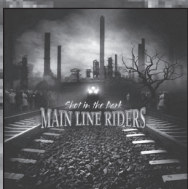
WHITECROSS – NINETEEN EIGHTY SEVEN (with 6 bonus tracks)

Complete Re-recording of original debut self-titled 1987 release featuring the bonus tracks "Love On The Line" and "Re:Animate" (all Rex Carroll guitar jam/solo) + 4 hidden out takes. Fans of Ratt, Motley Crue, and Stryper won't find anything more worthy of their money than this release! Originally released on Girder Records, this instant classic now finds new life with Retroactive Records.



THE SEVENTH POWER – DOMINION & POWER

Another colossal collaboration between axe-shredder extraordinaire Bill Menchen (Titanic / Final Axe) and world-class drummer Robert Sweet of Stryper. Menchen exceeds his lofty reputation with addictive riffs and fast, fluid, emotion-filled guitar solos ala Randy Rhoads. *Dominion & Power* comes together to create a cohesive slab of dark metal with perfect flow, and an escalating sense of creepiness powered along by Menchen's Ozzy-styled brooding vocals – both monotonous and hypnotic! Lyrically, the album gallops forth with doom n' gloom, book of Revelation vintage apocalyptic themes countered with both salvation and redemption. *Dominion & Power* proves to be an essential building block in putting together the perfect heavy metal collection. [theseventhpower.com]



MAIN LINE RIDERS – SHOT IN THE DARK

Anthem hooks, cleverly mixing snarl and attitude, the band has no problems paying homage to their musical rabbis, AC/DC, Guns-n-Roses, and Skid Row, while appealing to fans of modern day bands Vains of Jenna, Buck Cherry, and The Showdown.

All releases available from
radrockers.com, cdbaby.com, Northwestern Christian Stores,
amazon.com, girdermusic.com, Mardel Christian Stores,
christiandiscs.com and your favorite online stores!

Distributed by brutalplanet@gmail.com | retroactiverecords.net

Retroactive Records



BY JONATHAN SWANK

With the relative international resurgence of melody driven metal, Jacobs Dream – who recently saw the release of their 4th album *Dominion of Darkness* – may just find them self in the right place at the right time. This melodic power metal band has been around for over a decade. During that time they have released three albums on a major metal label (Metal Blade) and through touring, have garnered a sizeable international fan base. While they have undergone some personnel changes – the most noteworthy being Chaz Bond taking over for David Taylor on vocals after the release of the band's second album *Theater of War* – their style and sound has remained essentially unchanged. However, their approach to marketing themselves has changed: they do it independently, without label support. Singer Chaz Bond was kind enough to answer a few questions for us so read on to discover more about the band, their new music and their new approach.

JS: Jacobs Dream has been around for awhile, but since some of our readers may not be familiar with your music, can you give a brief synopsis of your style and some of your influences?

CB: Collectively, we are all influenced by different things

which help to create the overall identity of the band. I would say that if you could imagine a combination of Iron Maiden, Iced Earth, early Metallica and maybe a little Queensryche then you might get an idea. Many refer to us as power metal, but I just consider us to be a very melodic metal band.

***Dominion of Darkness* was released independently. Was that purposeful or have you been unsuccessful at this point in working with a new label?**

Yes it was purposeful. Our contract with Metal Blade was up after three records so we had decided to try being independent. We feel that we have built enough of an international fan base that we shouldn't have any problem selling our new record on our own. We have had some interest from labels, but for this record we are doing it alone. We are still open to the idea of a new label if the offer is fair to us.

What decisions lead you guys to release this independently?

Basically, when you are on a record label everyone outside the band that is involved usually gets the larger cut of each record sale and the band is left with

a very small percentage to split among five people. That makes it very difficult to profit from all the hard work. Also with the new world of the internet many bands are doing things without record labels so we just decided to test the waters.

What happened to the deal with Metal Blade and what was it like being on that kind of major metal label?

With our contract fulfilled we had the option of doing another record or moving on so we decided to take our chances. It was nice to be recognized as a member of Metal Blade Records. People tend to take you seriously when you are affiliated with a major label and it definitely put us on the map. I will always be grateful for that. I do feel that it was supposed to happen when it did, but now it's time for us to move forward.

What kind of response, so far, have you had to the new release? And how do you guys feel about this one compared to prior works?

So far the response has been very good. Personally, I feel much closer to this record due to my increased involvement in the writing process, so I will have to say

that it is probably overall my favorite JD record.

You have quite a different vocal, almost more gothic, style compared to the previous singer (David Taylor) which has resulted in a "new" sound for Jacobs Dream. In what ways, if at all, has the band had to adjust the songwriting process to accommodate your qualities?

The only adjustment that has ever been made is that the band has tuned down, I think, half a step from where they were on the first two records. The music hasn't really changed. We just write what we feel at the time and so the band will always be Jacobs Dream.

It seems that the lyrics this time around focus on the global and personal manifestations/results of sin. Tell me a bit about the song "Embraced by Sorrow," which is very moving.

Thank you. I wrote the song in hopes that it would cause some people to stop and think about people and/or things that they might usually take for granted. Yes, it might be intense, but sometimes that's what we need to do to rattle the cage a little. So many people just go through their lives as if they are going to live forever, when the fact is life is short and we only get one life to live. I believe that we should cherish our families, our friends, our children and stop to think before we make some of the decisions we make in this life.

"Hero" is another interesting song. What motivated you guys to write this song?

Sadly, this song is based on a true event. There was a fifteen year old girl who was killed several years ago here in Columbus, Ohio. The case went unsolved for years until recently the killer's DNA matched a prisoner in another state. We just wanted to honor her memory while showing our disgust for the actions of the coward who took her life.

I hear so much negative talk these days in forums about Christians in metal. Have your personal convictions and beliefs lead to any kind of persecution or harsh treatment within the metal community, either here in the States or worldwide?

Actually, no. I haven't seen a whole lot of that coming our way. I think that people simply view us as a metal band that happens to have some spiritual beliefs. We have never marketed ourselves as a "Christian band." We just allow them to discover us in what ever way they choose simply by listening to our music.

What do you guys think about the relative resurgence in popularity of Iron Maiden – arguably one of the best metal bands of all time – and what impact does that have on a band like Jacobs Dream?

I think it is fantastic and of course it certainly doesn't hurt us at all. For a while it seemed like all the new metal bands had these monotone growling vocals and almost no one was actually singing anymore, but now things finally appear to be getting back to real singing which is just fantastic in my eyes. Bands like Maiden and Iced Earth gaining popularity certainly doesn't hurt Jacobs Dream.

What are your plans for touring to support the new release or to promote the band?

We plan to do a string of shows here and perhaps in some of the Hispanic countries. We really want to do as many shows as we can afford to do. I personally feel that we didn't do enough shows to support the last record, *Drama Of The Ages*, so look out for future tour dates because they are coming.

Finally, in 5 words or less, describe the essence of Jacobs Dream.

Emotion-driven, thought-provoking metal.

Thanks for taking the time out to do this.

No problem and thank you.



**"So many people just go through their lives as if they are going to live forever, when the fact is life is short and we only get one life to live."
– Chaz Bond**

NIGHTMARE RECORDS NEW RELEASES



SACRED DAWN "Gears of the Machine...A New Beginning"

Melodic yet aggressive blend Power Metal, Hard rock & Progressive & Gothic Metal. Sacred dawn putting a nice spin on the Genre! Fans of Megadeth, Kamelot & Firewind should approve!

ALKEMYST "Through Painful Lanes"

Sounding like a combination of DRAGON FORCE & SYMPHONY X these guys Combine the Technical aspects of, SPIRAL ARCHITECT and DARKWATER, and create a masterful blend of French Progressive Power metal.



AVAILABLE NOW!



SCELERATA "Skeletons Domination"

Well crafted melodic and epic metallic soundscapes, combined with some speedy adrenaline pumping tunes, revealing technique and just plain melodic power metal. Fans of MASTERPLAN / SONATA ARCTICA / GAMMA RAY.



NIGHTMARE RECORDS

AVAILABLE AT
www.nightmare-records.com
...and other cool stores that handle metal!

NIGHTMARE is Distributed by KOCH and CENTURY MEDIA



Available
Now!

Winter's Dawn



Wandering Through the Realm of Frosted Beauty

'Wandering Through the Realm of Frosted Beauty'
Limited Edition Digipak

...Antestor melds with age old Emperor...

You're held within the cold grip of a Winter's Dawn

Soulfreezing Atmospheric Black Metal

www.nhmetal.com



<http://stores.ebay.com/berynium>

Your hard to find Independent and Import music available now on Ebay! Broad availability is our advantage. We try to make independent and import music easy to find, rather than searching independent websites.



CRIMSON MOONLIGHT
In Depths of Dreams Unconscious
\$11.99



DROTTNAR
Welterwerk
\$14.99



HB
Frozen Inside
\$15.99



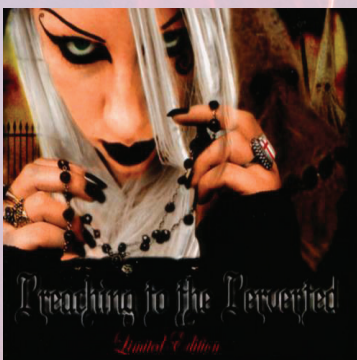
HIS WITNESS
Kingdom Come
\$12.99



HOLY BLOOD
The Patriot
\$13.99



HOLY SOLDIER
Holy Soldier (Reissue w/ Bonus)
\$14.99



TEMPLAR
Preaching to the Perverted
\$13.99



DIVINEFIRE
Farewell
\$18.99



SAINT
Crime Scene Earth
\$12.99

Berynum Production | PO BOX 3804 | Lake Havasu City, AZ 86405 | USA | berynium.info@yahoo.com



INTERVIEW BY JONATHAN SWANK

If you love cutting edge progressive metal with tons of heaviness and melody, then do yourself a favor and check out Bay Area up-and-comers Zero Hour. Formed by twin brothers Jasun (guitars) and Troy (bass) Tipton way back in the mid 90's, ZH has been patiently working their way up the metal ranks with their powerful and original style. The addition of singer Chris Salinas (formerly of Power of Omens) in 2006 heralded the release of the more melodic *Specs of Pictures Burnt Beyond*, an album which propelled them to a new level of acclaim. It was no surprise then that 2008 saw the release of their 5th studio album, *Dark Deceiver*, to rave reviews. In June, they played alongside Darkwater and Sun Caged in the two day Bay Area Rockfest where they were billed the second to final act in support of Liquid Tension Experiment; and most recently, in July, they performed with the likes of Jet Boy, Skid Row, Dokken and Queensryche at the South Texas Rockfest. Jasun – an extremely laid back and genuine guy – took the time out to chat with me during some down time between the two rock fests.

Well, let me begin by saying that *Dark Deceiver* is an absolutely breathtaking experience. In a world of progressive metal clones, it's truly refreshing to listen to Zero Hour and be like, "Wow ... these guys don't sound like anyone else out there, or anyone I have ever heard before."

Awesome, man

That must be gratifying for you to hear as an artist.

Yeah absolutely, man. I mean when my brother and I were coming to Chris... We said, "You know we gotta write this next album." And our whole attitude was just like, "Let's just write a better album." We made the melodies for the vocals very

melodic... And of course, you have a lot of melodic passages in there as well. No, it's really great to hear that. People feel that it's more of an original take for progressive metal because, in the genre, it can come to sound the same a lot of times.

Right. Well, I have followed what you guys have been doing since the first release.

Oh, great. Right on.

Actually, I wanted to do this interview last year with the release of *Specs...*, but

I'm actually glad that we waited until this year with this new release. This kinda goes back in time... What inspired you and your brother to create Zero Hour? I mean, it's kind of a unique brand of heavy metal.

We are really big Pat Metheny fans and we liked some of the material where he had really long compositions. It always had a format, kinda like changing parts over and over again and going into many passages to make it really dynamic. And we always kind of thought, "Well gosh, it would be great if we could do something like that but with a metal sense," because that's the way we like it. We like the chunk. We grew up with just the bands like ... well Rainbow was our first, if you'll say rock or metal band that we just loved. Growing up, my Dad would listen ... we were listening to music all the time. He would listen to Elvis, James Brown. My Mom would listen to ... Gosh, you have Pink Floyd, Hendrix, Earth, Wind

we were playing that out on the last album. So it just came to a point where we were either gonna come to a real standstill, in waiting awhile... And so, we just wanted to get on with it so my brother and I had a lot of takes on how the lyrics were going... Well, not the lyrics, I'm sorry, the melody lines. Troy and I were doing it in a little different way. Usually we are very organic in the writing process, you know, "Let's just jam." This was more parts – that were coming in and out of the studio – that Troy and I would put together and then would bring to Mikey. It had an overall different feel and work ethic in how we were putting this thing together.

I think the songs are easier to listen to over and over again than anything you have done before. That's kinda my take on it.

Oh, awesome. Great, great, great.

It almost seems with that song ("Dark Deceiver") that it's about a person who is doing something that they don't want to do. It's like they've got this dark side. And they've got this good side and they do this dark thing and then they wake up and they are like, "Wow, I can't believe I did that?"

Honestly, that's exactly what it is, and it's cool that you caught on to that like that. Yeah, the guy has these two sides to him and he doesn't realize it as he goes into the dream state. His other side came out of him when he didn't realize it and he killed his wife.

That's pretty wild because that's what human nature is like. We are like that. We are two-sided: we have our good and our ugly.

Yeah. Yeah.

Kind of along those lines, and you probably don't get too many people asking you this in an interview,

"He gives love. That's why when you do hear it, it's about love.
I believe that's all it is.
You know, He loves you, and when your time is up here ...
He's gonna bring you in with open arms.
I just believe in God and I believe He loves."
– Jasun Tipton

& Fire, George Benson, Pat Metheny and so that's kind of where that side came out of. After listening to all this music – because, I mean, it was very diverse – you just think, "It would be cool to just make it our own way." We wanted the technical passages; we wanted it to be dark; we wanted it heavy. We never wanted to forget the metal sense in the music. I mean, sometimes that gets taken away.

That's awesome. Tell me a bit about Chris Salinas. I think he's been a great addition to the band. In what ways has he been able to bring your music to a higher level?

He has a great voice. I mean, my brother and I wrote pretty much all the lyrics and all the melodies for Dark Deceiver. So, what's great that you have with Chris is that he's got so much range. He can sound like so many different... He's got so many varieties in his vocals. There's times he sounds like Bowie ... and then of course, there's Geoff Tate.

He actually sings in a Queensryche tribute band, right? Mindcrime.

Yeah. Yeah, he does.

How do you think *Dark Deceiver* differs from your prior work up to this point?

In the past, we always had the vocalist write their lyrics and the melodies. This kinda got a little different. We gave Chris a couple of songs and then were waiting a pretty long time. We were like, "Well, do you have anything going on?" And he was like, "Well, I got melodies and they're coming together." And this was "Lies" and "The Passion of Words." We had already written "The Temple Within" because

One thing I thought, too, that stuck out with this new album was... Your lyrics seem more accessible than ever before, almost kind of spiritual in content. Was that purposeful?

There are kind of many things... Well, first we were going to try to do a conceptual disc. But with the difference in everything going on with all the material... Also, the different writings with Chris doing "The Temple Within" and his stuff, those were first. So, that kind of lead us away from the conceptual idea. Sorry, give me a second. My dog wants to be let out. Hold on. [takes a break to let the dog out] Sorry man.

That alright. That's kinda what makes phone interviews fun.

Yeah, yeah! Well, here... When Troy and I were writing for "The Power to Believe," "Inner Spirit" and Resurrection" ... those three songs follow a concept and are spiritual. The story is about a young Native American tribe leader who is risking his life by leading his enemy into uncertain territory so that his tribe is not exposed. When he feels he is pushed to the limits he looks to the sky for guidance. The spirit of his parents helps him. He's looking to his parents to find the answers. Musically speaking it's a dynamic chapter that is built with the landscape of movement. And as you can see, at the end, when he is looking to the sky for guidance – and that he has protected his tribe – he sees that he has resurrected his father. So, it's a really cool story and that's what we were trying to put together as a concept for those three songs. My brother wrote all of (the song) "Dark Deceiver." He was into horror movies and it was all crazy and heavy. It's just got a horror vibe to it.

but what do you think of Jesus Christ?

I believe there is a higher spirit out there. I hope so because I hope that in the end, I get to be with my loved ones. If they pass over and I pass over I hope that I get to see them again. That's my hope and that's my belief. I am spiritual and I do believe in God but I do believe that there are a lot of people that put it in the wrong context and it's them using their word of God to further their lives when it's more of a lie. I don't like that and it does turn me off. But I have my belief, there is a spiritual God out there and that when I pass over I am gonna be with my loved ones. I hope that's it. I believe that everyone wants to believe in a higher power; that there is gonna be a good place for all of us.

That's a really honest answer. Jesus claims that He is "the way the truth and the life." It's kind of a narrow road. I noticed that you mentioned that in one of your songs – a narrow road. What do you think of that?

Yeah. And you know, I don't know. If I don't go to church every Sunday, and then there's a guy who prays every day... And because I believe in God and I pray, but I might not pray every day. I'll admit that. There are guys out there who killed all their family, who raped somebody or something like that and in jail they find God. Okay, well that's great and all. But they believe that by them praying ... and I've heard this before by Christians telling me... And look, there's a lot of good Christians out there ... and there's a lot of good Catholics out there. I'm Catholic. My mom's a Christian. But they say that because they pray every day to God ... there's a line ... they're gonna be in Heaven before you. And I'm like, "There is no such thing."

Cont'd on page 20



INTERVIEW BY CHRIS BECK

IT HAPPENS ALL THE TIME. TOO OFTEN, REALLY. A BAND HAS A BIT OF SUCCESS, ONLY TO MAKE CHANGES ON SUBSEQUENT ALBUMS – MAKING THE MUSIC LESS HEAVY AND THE LYRICS LESS DIRECT – WITH THE HOPE OF GREATER MASS APPEAL. IT CAN WORK, BUT AT WHAT PRICE? ALIENATING THE CORE FAN BASE? CREATING SONGS THAT HAVE NO CLEAR MESSAGE? SYNNOVE TASTED A BIT OF SUCCESS IN 2005 WHEN THEY RELEASED THEIR EP; IT WAS WELL RECEIVED BY MUSIC LISTENERS AND MEDIA ALIKE. WOULD THE BAND LOOK TO MAKE CHANGES ON THEIR NEW ALBUM, *THE WHORE AND THE BRIDE*? YES, THERE ARE CHANGES, TO BE SURE. WITH BRUTAL MUSIC AND BLATANT LYRICS THAT LEAVE NO DOUBT ABOUT WHERE THEIR FAITH LIES, IT'S CLEAR SYNNOVE CHANGED IN EXACTLY THE WAY THEY WANTED TO.

Chris Beck: For someone unfamiliar with the band, how would you describe the music of Synnove?

Brad Bessell: We are much like our cheesy but apt promo states: a dialogue between groove and chaos, melody and dissonance! We like to create black metal with influences from other metal genres such as death, goth and doom, or whatever influence inspires us at the time, and create a dialogue between brutality and beautiful melodies and emotions. For us it represents paradoxes such as a God who is love yet pours out His wrath on human beings who are sinful but who also have the image of God in them. Our faith is about coming to terms with the mystery of these paradoxes that we encounter in life and transcending them. I like the idea of

shirt that bore the statement "Jesus is a c**t." Seeing this made me very sad inside and I wondered, "Does this guy even know anything about Jesus at all? Are there any Christian bands reaching out to guys like this?" I followed him into a local metal and goth club and there was this band playing black and death metal to only about thirty people, complete with upside down crosses and the yelling out of your usual blasphemies. Right then and there I knew that this scene was to be both my mission field and the place I was called to express myself artistically. Earlier, I was more into goth metal stuff, but from then on I consciously started to listen to, and write in, a more extreme vein of music, and eventually came to form Synnove. So, I have no problem playing with a local band or one that is Satanic because, aside from being

"For us it represents paradoxes such as a God Who is love, yet pours out His wrath on human beings, who are sinful but who also have the image of God in them."

finding music that conceptualizes that journey and represents it artistically.

Now that your latest album, *The Whore and the Bride*, has been out for a little while, are you happy with the end result? If you could go back in time, would you change anything about the album or the recording process?

Overall, we are very happy with the result, although there is much I would do differently. I would maybe trim some songs down a bit here and there. I would have liked to make it darker and colder but I'm not sure that the songs lent themselves to it at the time. There is still a sound and a feeling that I am searching for which I call "the darkness and pathos of God." I think we have only just begun to find it. When we, through our sound, make ourselves and others feel like they are in a storm of wrath and passion that comes from the heart of God, then we have achieved our goal.

What led you to name the album *The Whore and the Bride*? What message were you trying to convey?

I can't actually remember who came up with the title itself—it may have been Adam from Soundmass—but the ideas behind the title all started many years ago. I was in a church where the leader was spiritually abusive, legalistic and controlling. It caused many friends of mine who I deeply love to either leave the faith or to be so wounded that they have never made it back to being in fellowship with God's people in a local church. Much of what I wanted to write is a lament on their behalf. Later in my journey I was in a church where the horror of sexual abuse occurred, as a youth leader abused young boys. At the time, the hierarchy of the church seemed more concerned with possible lawsuits than with helping the victims. This was very painful for the minister of the church, to have someone that he had trusted abuse the children of his church, and watching what it did to him broke my heart. I began to write songs about it as a part of the healing process for myself and others. I have also come to be disturbed by the amount of greed and materialism that is in both the church and society and the fact that so many people are more concerned with selfish pursuits than with the gospel, social justice or the care of the earth. In many ways, I felt like an angry prophet or John the Baptist as I began to write, drawing from Old Testament imagery where Israel is called both a whore and a bride as grief is poured out over their falls. These Old Testament texts speak to us today as we come to terms with our own failure as the bride of Christ. Our love of money, sex and power has taken us away from our first love, Jesus Christ.

If you had the opportunity to play a concert opening for a band that has anti-Christian or blasphemous lyrics, such as Dimmu Borgir, would you accept the offer?

Let me answer that question by telling you a story. I was at a Christian all-ages hardcore show at a local church. Halfway through the gig I began to feel like I did not belong. I also felt this inner nudging to leave and go into the city. As I sat on the train, I reflected on how many of my friends in bands were so focused on making it big in the Christian music scene and playing in a little "Christian fish bowl." I also reflected on how trend-conscious they had become and how any sense of being in this for ministry had been lost. It occurred to me that there was not much extreme black metal, death metal or grindcore being played by Christians and that the very trendy "youth group" hardcore, emo and punk had taken over everything. When I got off the train, I saw this guy walking down the street wearing a Cradle of Filth

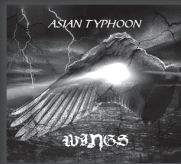
there to play metal, I am there in the hope of our music being a bridge to where a relationship can take place and the Christian faith can be shared and people's views about Jesus can be changed. So, if Dimmu Borgir asked us to play, why would that be any different? I would still be there to play metal to that one guy in the audience with the Cradle of Filth shirt that says "Jesus is a c**t," with the hope that I could help change his mind.

God bless.

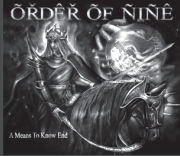
[Ed — See review this issue.]

HEAVENS

NIGHTMARE RECORDS NEW RELEASES



ASIAN TYPHOON "X.Y.Z.-A Wings"
As the founding vocalist of LOUDNESS, Minoru Niihara is well-known as one of Japan's top heavy metal exports touring with likes of AC/DC and Motley Crue, and huge MTV hits in the 80's this is one Metal band that delivers the goods and doesn't conform to trends.



ORDER OF NINE "A Means To Know End"
This album sees Order of Nine step up their aggression, speed and power, this new album hits you square in the face with a thrash metal/ U.S. Power Metal attack.



SIX MINUTE CENTURY "Time Capsules"
Progressive heavy rock with a musical sound in the vein of Savatage, Dio, and Kamelot, and the vocal style of Fates Warning, Dream Theater, and TNT.



AVAILABLE AT
www.nightmare-records.com
...and other cool stores that handle metal!

NIGHTMARE is Distributed by KOCH and CENTURY MEDIA

ALBUM REVIEWS



ALETHEIAN

DYING VINE

Previously known as Crutch, this Pennsylvania progressive technical death metal quartet has actually been around for over a decade, but they have never had a big label push ... that is until now. Ironclad, a subsidiary of Metal Blade, obviously felt there was tremendous potential here as this is actually a reissue/remaster (with all new very cool artwork) of this 2005 release plus one bonus track – a cover of the Cynic tune “How Could I.” For those that haven’t heard ‘em before, imagine the perfect mix of the frenetic intensity of early Extol with the progressive dynamics of Becoming the Archetype and you have a great picture of the soundscape here – blistering metal with intelligent and exhortational lyrics. The production sound quality is better than ever, so don’t miss the “truth” this time around. [Ironclad/Metal Blade] Jonathan Swank



WILLOW'S WHISPER

PAGE TURN

It's always nice to be surprised by a band you've either never heard of or only recently discovered. Such is the case with Willow's Whisper. This is top-notch female-fronted progressive hard rock from Belgium. They juxtapose heavy guitars with soothing vocals, and then introduce keyboards and smooth, ethereal vocals for a unique take on progressive rock/metal. Musically, they could be compared to Porcupine Tree, who always teeter on metal, never fully crossing over, although WW's sound pushes that boundary even further, and their instrumentation as well. Furthermore, the band's lyrics – though often allegorical – speak of hope in today's dark times rather than the cynicism often seen in the band's secular counterparts. Highly recommended for fans of contemporary hard prog rock. [Independent] Loyd Harp



THE SEVENTH POWER

DOMINION & POWER

WOW! I think this release blows away the first release. The musicianship is tight; this contains some of the best guitar work I've heard from Bill Menchen yet and Robert Sweet lays down some of his best metal licks. Production is superb, and overall this is a

great power metal release. My only complaint is that Bill's vocal style is not my preference, and his digitized sounding vocal effects and the somewhat monotone presentation just lacks the power that the amazing music deserves. [Retroactive Records] Jeff McCormack

[Doc – Menchen's voice sounds surprisingly similar to Kevin Moore (Chroma Key, OSI) which really gives this riff heavy metal a fascinating twist, but it's Robert Sweet's most dynamic performance on drums (since collaborating with Menchen) that almost steals the show. The lack of variety in output remains the biggest drawback to Menchen's work. It would be nice to see him experiment with different styles and sounds, more dynamic contrast, etc ... maybe even a ballad or two. Sound quality is killer.]



DOCILE

I wasn't quite sure what to expect from this band from the Netherlands. About all I knew about them was where they were from. What I'm hearing is a pleasant surprise: melodic thrash with death and black undertones, reminiscent of Mordecai and very early Immortal Souls (remember that first split release?) Some of the chords used are of the Gothenburg variety, but they are used in refreshing ways. The rhythms are pretty straight-forward and of the thrash variety, but the ways they used melody in the chords is really quite refreshing. Docile have recently signed to Open Grave Records, so I for one am looking forward to more from this band. [First Paradox Metal Records] Loyd Harp



TEMPLAR

PREACHING TO THE PERVERTED

Having not heard their earlier release, I was not sure what to expect, but wanted to hear what Josh Kramer contributed to this release. I was pleasantly surprised with song after song of interesting twists in an old school metal feel with goth influences. Heavy solid crunching guitars and tasteful solos scattered throughout, with a barrage of different vocals styles. The two songs with Josh sound amazing too, some of his best work of recent years. [Black Pope Music] Jeff McCormack

DEUTORONOMIUM

FROM THE MIDST OF THE BATTLE

After nine long years, Finland's innovative Christian metal pioneers are back ... in a big way! Reunion albums have a history of being hit or miss – more often disappointing, because fans have these huge expectations for the band to pick up right where they left off many years ago. While you the listener will be the true judge here, it's safe to say that this band didn't choose the path of the current rage in metal. The heavily thrash-infused death metal (with very discernable death growls, mind you) on this disc is truly praiseworthy – the diversity of sounds here noteworthy. And even though the epic 17-minute “Tales...” does tax the listener's attention at times, it's all good in the end. Thanks to Bullroser for yet another solid release and for helping to get these guys “back to the front.” [Bullroser] Jonathan Swank



LETTER 7

FOLLOW THE LIGHT

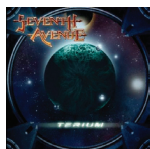
The sophomore effort by this commercial metal band continues in the same direction musically as on their first outing. With a sound that is very reminiscent of many of the great metal bands of the 80's, I am immediately struck with a comparison to Dokken (quite often) when listening to this bold and in your face evangelistic release. It is great to hear a return to clean, melodic and powerful music as this; go ahead, call me old school, but I love this stuff. [Independent] Jeff McCormack

FIRE THRONE

DAY OF DARKNESS AND BLACKNESS

Incredibly harsh, minimalist black metal here. The production values on *Day* make *Hellig Usvart* sound like a radio-friendly screamo release. Not that it's a bad thing. With this genre of black metal, the harsher the better. Fire Throne aren't trying to gain fans so much as destroy ears. The disc is comprised of two segments. Tracks 1-9 appear to be new material, while tracks 10-17 are demo tracks from 2004. The demo tracks, not surprisingly, are even more raw and harsh than the first half of the CD. This is for listeners of raw, unblack metal. Fans of Elgibbor should especially take note. [Nokternal Hemizphear] Loyd Harp

Surf this: massacre-records.com, bombworksrecords.com, jacobsdream.info, nbmetal.com, retroactiverecords.net, myspace.com/robbarkin, lament.com.mx



SEVENTH AVENUE

TERIUM

Though still relatively unknown in the US, these German power metal masters have been at it for 15 years. Their sixth full-length album musically and vocally compares favorably to fellow country mates Helloween, Running Wild, and Grave Digger. *Terium* is their first concept album – a fictional parallel story to the life of Christ – written in a sci-fi universe where mankind is addicted to a drug called Terium that seems to give the user long life, health, and happiness – but nothing comes without a price... The album is altogether compelling, the story original and the metal quite hearty. But why would I expect any less from Seventh Avenue? [Massacre Records] Chris Gatto

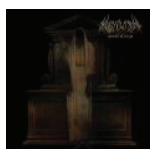


BEAHLIAH

ANTHOLOGY OF THE UNDEAD

Beahliah (R.I.P.) 1996 – 1999. This Indonesian incarnation of black metal ran the full gamut of styles (primitive to symphonic) and shared much in common with fellow Indonesian Kekal. It was always said about Beahliah that if you don't like black metal with high pitched screeching vocals that you should steer clear of their cacophonous outpourings. Although Beahliah didn't enjoy a full life – or a full-length release – friends (Jeff Arwadi) and admirers (Rob Colwell) were kind enough to put together a commemoration – an anthology of solid-sounding tunes compiled from their 4 demo releases. Unnamed sources say the songs never sounded better. Beahliah is survived by Dozhaialach D (aka Doctor D) who was the sole proprietor of this enterprise. To this day, his whereabouts and his exact involvement in the death of Beahliah remain an X-file. Sympathy gifts may be sent to: c/o Rob Colwell at Bombworks Records.

[Obit written/info compiled by Jonathan Swank]



AZMAVETH

STRONG AS DEATH

With the band name and logo, I knew this was going to be either black or death metal, and I was leaning towards black. Correct indeed! But these days, there are so

many varieties of black metal, and Azmaveth pull off a nice mix of both harsh black metal (without being minimalist) and atmospheric (without being cheesy). There are 13 tracks on the CD. Six full-length songs are surrounded by seven short, instrumental interludes. Although these tracks don't stand on their own as songs, they do help make the full-length songs more distinguishable (lack of distinction in songs being a fault of some extreme metal releases). While the disc bogs down slightly around track 10, *Strong as Death* does make a fine contribution to the black metal scene with its blatant lyrics and combination of both atmospheric and harsh black metal sounds. [Bombworks Records] Loyd Harp



JACOBS DREAM

DOMINION OF DARKNESS

The 4th release (second with Chaz Bond on vocals) from this now independent US power metal band picks up right where *Drama of the Ages* left off, with over an hour of epic traditional/power metal in the vein of Iron Maiden. There are tons of wonderful guitars here – more than can be appreciated on a few listens – as Noble and Berry shred through these mostly mid-tempo songs with ease. Lyrically, this seems to be the band's most confrontational and boldly Christian release to date – many of the songs dealing directly with the consequences of sin. Bond's eerie Eric Clayton meets Geoff Tate vocal style gives the band a unique sound – different from most power metal acts. While the quality here is high, there are a few tracks where the drums don't seem "in sync" with the rest of the band. Production issues aside, this slab of metal will more than satisfy the band's fan base. [Independent] Jonathan Swank

BORGAZUR

2P3: ALCHEMISTS EARTH OF AEON A.C.

Have you ever jumped into the water and realized you are way in over your head? Just look at that title! I have listened to this disc over 5 times – in no less than 3 different listening environments – and carefully combed the lyrics (beautiful insert book cover to beautiful cover) only to realize that I wished that my extreme metal colleague Mike Larson was reviewing this and not me! Honesty aside... While I admit this music is very hard to really dig your heels

into and enjoy, I refuse to say anything negative about the message or the art. This is extreme... It's God centric... This is black metal. There, I said it. [Nokternal Hemizphear] Doc



DELIVERANCE

RIVER DISTURBANCE

Perhaps the most controversial "D" release ever, Matt Hunt and Jimmy Brown deserve a "metal" of honor for resurrecting this work of art. When this was originally released in 1994, many long time Deliverance fans bailed out on Jimmy. I confess: this one was hard to like at first. The first 5 songs sound even more fantastic than back then; their progressiveness probably underappreciated at the time. But I could never really dig the last 4 tracks for various reasons. However, 10 plus years later, I find these songs very refreshing. And while I still don't love the last 4 songs, I can appreciate the chances Jimmy took at the time. This re-issue has a wonderfully full and bright sound and the bonus tracks are truly worthwhile. Jimmy's monotone "word" at the end sounds a bit scripted, but the information he provides is invaluable to gaining a better understanding of one of his most beloved works. The CD, cover and booklet art has been beautifully redone by Caleb Olsen. [Retroactive] Jonathan Swank



TRAUMATONE

SHADOW THEORY

Lots of chaos, preaching samples, and doomy metal slice the silence on this UK artist's demo. Rob Harkin laces his monotone vocals with trance-like loops and metal guitar riffs to a mostly pleasing effect. [Independent] Doug Van Pelt



LAMENT

THE BEST OF LAMENT

Culling from each of its three albums, this best-of shows the band's development from its superfast speed metal (*Tears of a Leper*) era to slower but intensely heavy thrash with some classic metal leanings (*Breathless*) to its latest material with three brand new songs. If you've never given this Mexican powerhouse a listen, this is a perfect place to start. [Independent] Doug Van Pelt



DEMON HUNTER'S RYAN CLARK, BELIEVER'S KURT BACHMAN, AND LIVING SACRIFICE'S BRUCE FITZHUGH

HEAVEN'S
METAL

SYNNOVE

The Whore and the Bride

Epic and aggressive black metal
infused with melodic doom and death

Brutality . . . Beauty
Dissonance . . . Harmony
Groove . . . Chaos


soundmass
www.soundmass.com


the whore and the bride
www.myspace.com/synnovemetal



Photo: Doug Van Pelt

DISCIPLE'S KEVIN YOUNG





Photo: Christina Malzahn

Zero Hour | cont'd:

Like a “holier than thou” thing...

Yeah, it's not about that. I feel He's accepting ... He gives love. That's why when you do hear it, it's about love. I believe that's all it is. You know, He loves you, and when your time is up here ... He's gonna bring you in with open arms. I just believe in God and I believe He loves. That's it. There's no, “God came to me in a dream and told me to get a divorce.” Where in the Book does it ever say? It says to work out your problems. And I guess that's where I get turned off. I have friends who are atheists, but they are good people. Maybe I don't agree with them, with their spiritual guide and how they see it, but they are still friends of mine. And I'm not gonna judge them that way. Like, “Oh, I can't be friends with you because of...” But, there are a lot of good people out there. Spread love out there.

I'm on the same wavelength. I know exactly what you are saying. It's nice to be able to talk across barriers. You know, sometimes we don't get it right, but we are able to get it right because of the Spirit. But it's not by doing all these little things that we get to Heaven.

Yeah. And I'm glad you said that, because I agree with that. I always get nervous speaking about religion and things like that because I never want to offend anybody.

What kind of artists and music do you find inspirational?

Certain shows of late. I had the pleasure to see Return to Forever (aka Chick Corea), just recently, like a month back. And that was just like an amazing performance. It was one of the best performances I've seen in about 4 years. These guys... Al Di Meola, Stanley Clarke and Chick Corea. And these guys were just going off for a couple hours. They were all, I thought, at their best. Seeing a great show like that really inspires you. Just the artist, bringing it to another level. We just played a show with Liquid Tension (Experiment) and I just couldn't believe how great these guys are. I mean, they really are the “best of the best.” That's why they got that label. Those were the last couple real inspiring things for me musically to watch and just go, “Yeah, this is why I got into music and this is why I love it so much.”

Well here is kind of a fun question. Our world has become pretty insane lately and people have lost a sense of personal responsibility for their actions.

Yeah.

As musicians who are very obviously devoted to your talents/skills... I can tell that by listening to your music. What role, if any, do you feel Zero Hour play in helping people be accountable for their actions life?

This is my way of looking at it. Life is good, man. We are very lucky. We can listen to music whenever we want. We are not confined to a lot of things. We live in a pretty beautiful place. Yeah, the economy and a lot of things are not exactly at their best, but you can meet so many good people out there in the world. Love life, man. Life is just too short. I just try to be the best person I can while I'm here on this earth. Just love the people around you. I've got my brother – you know we are twins. I think I am the luckiest guy because we've been together from the very beginning. We're best of friends. I have a great... I have a beautiful wife and I have a great family. I think sometimes people forget to remember the good things in life that they have. Sometimes I think we just need to look at the things we do have and be thankful. I think if people more had that attitude, things would be cool.

Very cool. Is there anything that you want to leave with our readers?

We appreciate the people who come out and support us and I thank you guys so much for that. And with the constant support of that, we're gonna keep putting out music. Check our website and see if you can get out to support a show and to see what updates we do have going on.

Thanks, Jasun. Really appreciate you doing this.

Right on, man.





Photo: Doug Van Pelt

THE SHOWDOWN'S JOSH CHILDERS

HEAVEN'S
METAL

PASTOR BOB'S INTERNATIONAL REPORT

By Pastor Bob

I remember answering mail. Yes, we actually used to get letters in the mailbox when people wanted to communicate with each other. Telephone calls were far too expensive. Communication was slow. That is how we began the Christian metal movement in the 80's. I had a staff of people who simply did "snail" mail all day long. We answered thousands of phone calls on the "800 lines." Today, communication is amazing. We use email, message boards, MySpace and Skype. If you want to find out everything there is to know about a band, just "Google" them. If you want to find out what they sound like, visit their MySpace page. My column this month is dedicated to the international internet. I have asked three people who are doing their part to promote Christian bands, as well as establishing an international "cyber" community, to share their visions with you.

[myspace.com/pastorbobbeeman]



Florida, Belgium, Maryland & metal

Jay Williams, Matt Soberon & Vantor



Jay Williams Auburndale, Florida, USA

The Christian Metal Realm (CMR) (christianmetalrealm.niceboard.com/forum.htm) was established in 2001 as a Message Board where fans of heavy metal, who happened to be Christians, could gather and talk about

the BEST music on the planet ... HEAVY METAL! Artie Parker is the founder of the CMR and we now have a MySpace with close to 3000 friends. We use that site to help promote Christian Metal bands (myspace.com/christianmetalrealm). As a rule, we are not a "Christian only" community. We welcome people of all faiths to join in our love of all things metal.

The Christian Metal Realm is now proud to present *Volume III* of our limited edition CD's, featuring bands who are members of our community. *Volume III* will feature many familiar names, as well as some new "family members." The line-up includes: Ultimatum, Valediction, Liberty N Justice, Endless Funeral, Saint, Winter's Dawn, Pastor Brad, Promised Land, Faith Factor, Skyliner, The Sacrificed, Grave Forsaken, Temple of Blood, Illuminandi, Fragile, The Tift Project, Broken Union, Crimson Fight, and Mission Of One! Our future vision is to continue to provide a place where people can come together and talk about the greatest music on the earth ... METAL!



Matt Soberon Belgium

I took over jesusmetal.com from Max in 2007; he asked if I was interested and didn't need to wait long for a reply. The website focuses on writing reviews of Christian albums (old and new, underground and popular)

and interviewing bands (a part I want to expand even more in the future). This is all to help smaller bands get more exposure and give fans more information on their favorite bands. I was lucky enough to receive help from team members DrawnsworD and Phil Diez (Sorrowstorm/Encryptor), because it is quite a time-consuming ministry for one man/student. In the near future I want jesusmetal.com to grow into something people use even more as a reliable and interesting source for information, with a long-term goal maybe even turning it into a real 'zine. This all depends on what God's plans are for me and jesusmetal.com.



Vantor Maryland, USA

Our websites are there so that everybody can find new Christian Metal bands to listen to. We see it as being a very small way to help serve God. By running this page, we are helping to promote Christian bands who are ministering

for God, and helping to spread their message further; and we are also giving everybody a chance to see different, new bands in their own, specific niche. God has blessed the page a lot, and given us a tremendous amount of traffic and positive feedback about people giving their testimonies; and I constantly heard about people's lives being changed because they found God-worshipping Metal via the page. I now work together with Fredrik who works really hard with the site, and God will recognize that. He answers most of the fan mail and handles the band relations, interviews, and album reviews, while I have been working on a larger geocities site to host the entire band list which got too big for MySpace!

This started about two years ago and one of our hopes for the future is to have the largest, most comprehensive Christian Metal band list on the internet. We also just put out our first compilation CD which can be bought from us or from Nokternal Hemizphear. We appreciate all the prayers and support we have gotten from so many bands and all of the fans out there, and we love you guys. myspace.com/christianmetalfellowship.

THROWING DOWN THE GAUNTLET

By Steve Rowe

GRATEFULNESS

I am a positive and optimistic person. I always see to the up side of everything, never the down side. I became very frustrated with the general view "the church" had towards me some years following cancer and living with paraplegia. My name became "Why haven't you received your healing?" rather than Steve. Complete strangers in "the church" often just walked up and asked me this ridiculous question.

I am so very grateful for what God has done in and through me these past 12 years. Every one of us has some form of disability – mine happens to be physical. The perspective of "church healing ideas" always has a focus on physical disabilities? What about mental, emotional, social, behavioral and sexual disabilities? We all suffer in some way. It is part of being human. I believe if God is to heal my afflictions it will one day just start to happen. Until that day I am keeping busy as an overcomer.

I have had to move into a church environment that does not hassle me about what is wrong. I am simply so very grateful to God for a supportive wife and family, a nice place in which to live, food on the table, bills getting paid,

seeing my son grow up to be a strong young man of God, the ability to remain in Metal Mission, the ability to be independent, the ability to compete in sport and train hard at the gym, great friends and supporters world wide.

We should always see the cup as half full, never half empty. People in "the church" are unfortunately trained to focus on negatives. For example, "Please God, heal Steve from paralysis." But why not, "Praise You God that Steve is good news as an overcomer. The only paraplegic in the world playing in a Christian metal band. Thank You Lord that the witness of this has touched people who see that all things are possible following you."

It seems "the church" is never satisfied. Why is God never enough? "More, more, give us more God!!" Sounds like a 3 year old child! For what Christ has done for us, in us and can do through us we should be so very grateful. God came as man to die and rise on the 3rd day so we may inherit eternal life. Does God need to do any more? It is not about us! Life is about living to advance God's kingdom and being grateful for what we do have. The pursuit of "more" takes the focus off God and onto self. Be a grateful overcomer in your life.



DEUTERONOMIUM
-From The Midst Of The Battle-

Metal freaks from Finland are back!
www.myspace.com/deuteronomium
Order your copy now from:

YOUNG SIDE RECORDS

8961 Springwood Court
Bonita Springs, FL 34135, USA
+1 239-989-2059
info@youngside.com / www.youngside.com

HB
-Frozen Inside-

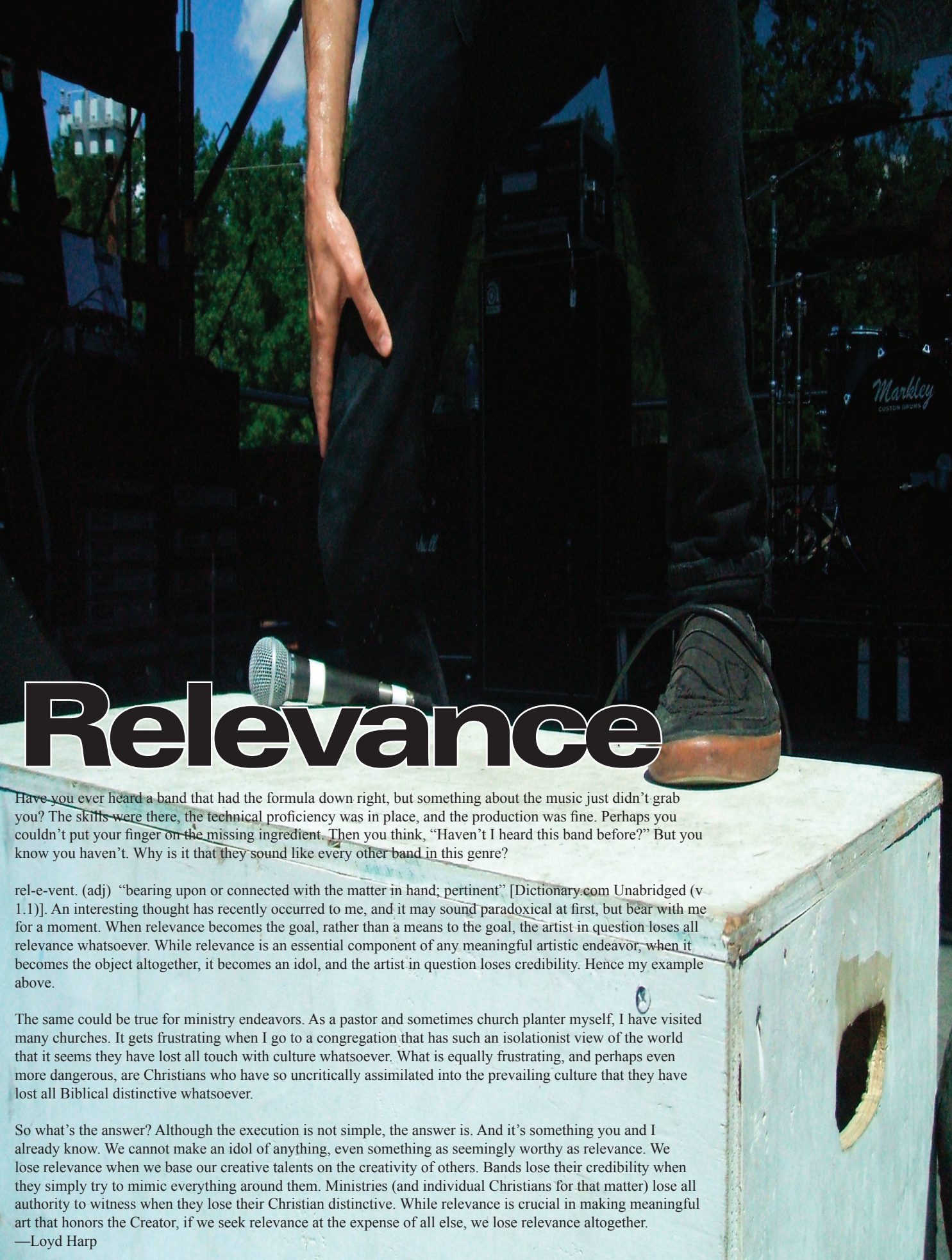
Symphonic and operatic metal veins of Nightwish! Choirs and orchestra gives album powerful atmosphere. Worship and praise with professional heavy metal!!!

www.myspace.com/hbmetal

BULLROSE RECORDS

www.bullroserrecords.com

<http://www.myspace.com/bullroserrecords>



Relevance

Have you ever heard a band that had the formula down right, but something about the music just didn't grab you? The skills were there, the technical proficiency was in place, and the production was fine. Perhaps you couldn't put your finger on the missing ingredient. Then you think, "Haven't I heard this band before?" But you know you haven't. Why is it that they sound like every other band in this genre?

rel-e-vent. (adj) "bearing upon or connected with the matter in hand; pertinent" [Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1)]. An interesting thought has recently occurred to me, and it may sound paradoxical at first, but bear with me for a moment. When relevance becomes the goal, rather than a means to the goal, the artist in question loses all relevance whatsoever. While relevance is an essential component of any meaningful artistic endeavor, when it becomes the object altogether, it becomes an idol, and the artist in question loses credibility. Hence my example above.

The same could be true for ministry endeavors. As a pastor and sometimes church planter myself, I have visited many churches. It gets frustrating when I go to a congregation that has such an isolationist view of the world that it seems they have lost all touch with culture whatsoever. What is equally frustrating, and perhaps even more dangerous, are Christians who have so uncritically assimilated into the prevailing culture that they have lost all Biblical distinctive whatsoever.

So what's the answer? Although the execution is not simple, the answer is. And it's something you and I already know. We cannot make an idol of anything, even something as seemingly worthy as relevance. We lose relevance when we base our creative talents on the creativity of others. Bands lose their credibility when they simply try to mimic everything around them. Ministries (and individual Christians for that matter) lose all authority to witness when they lose their Christian distinctive. While relevance is crucial in making meaningful art that honors the Creator, if we seek relevance at the expense of all else, we lose relevance altogether.

—Lloyd Harp